

Applicant : Niall R. Lynam
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Remarks:

The amendments and remarks presented herein are believed to be fully responsive to the Office Action dated November 28, 2005.

Claims 1-11 are pending in the application. Claims 12-21 have been canceled herein without prejudice and claims 1-6, 8 and 9 have been amended as set forth above. The specification has been amended to update incorporated patent applications that have now issued as United States patents. The amendments are fully supported in the specification and drawings as originally filed. No new matter has been added.

Claims 12-21 were withdrawn from consideration as being drawn to a non-elected invention, and are canceled herein without prejudice.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1-4, 8 and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lynam, U.S. Patent No. 6,522,451. Claims 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Lynam, in view of Wheatley et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,262,894. Claims 1-5, 8 and 11 were also rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schmidt, U.S. Patent No. 6,030,084, in view of Gillich et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,709,119. Claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Schmidt, in view of Gillich et al., and further in view of Wheatley et al.

Applicant respectfully traverses the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for the reasons set forth below.

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Applicant has amended independent claim 1 to clarify that a mirror substrate has an exterior surface that comprises a less curved inboard surface and a more curved outboard surface. The substrate is formed by one of casting, extrusion or injection molding of a polymeric resin material. The substrate has a reflector disposed on a surface thereof to provide a reflective element for a vehicle mirror assembly. A thin at least partially flexible glass sheet is adhered to the exterior surface so as to provide an anti-abrasion layer at the outboard and inboard surfaces of the exterior surface. The thin at least partially flexible glass sheet substantially conforms to the exterior surface of the substrate. The thin at least partially flexible glass sheet has a thickness of less than approximately 0.8 mm.

To establish a prima facie case of obviousness, three basic criteria must be met. First, there must be some suggestion or motivation either in the references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the reference or combine the reference teachings. Second, there must be a reasonable expectation of success. Finally, the prior art reference or references when combined must teach or suggest all the claimed limitations. The teaching or suggestion to make the claim combination and reasonable expectation of success must both be found in the prior art and not based on Applicant's disclosure. *In re Vaeck*, 947 F.2d 488, 20 U.S.P.Q.2d 1438 (Fed. Cir. 1991). See MPEP § 2143.

Applicant respectfully submits that Lynam '451 does not disclose, teach, suggest or render obvious the present invention, particularly as set forth in independent claim 1 and in the claims depending therefrom. Lynam '451 discloses a plano-auxiliary reflective element assembly having a plano element 50 and a multiradius element 55 supported on a backing plate 60. In stark contrast to the claimed invention, Lynam '451 does not disclose or suggest a thin at least partially flexible glass sheet, particularly one that is adhered to and substantially conforms to the exterior surface of the substrate. Contrary to the statements in the Office Action, the backing plate 60 of Lynam '451 is not a mirror substrate with a reflector disposed at a surface thereof. Further, the elements 50 and 55 of Lynam '451 (cited in the Office Action as being glass film) are clearly

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disclosed in Lynam '451 as comprising a plano element 50, which is described as a flat glass substrate, and a multiradius element 55, which is described as a curved/bent mirrored glass substrate. There is no disclosure or suggestion in Lynam '451 that either element 50, 55 comprises a thin at least partially flexible glass sheet that is adhered to and that substantially conforms to a curved exterior surface of a mirror substrate.

With respect to the rejection of independent claim 1 in view of the combination of Schmidt and Gillich et al., Applicant submits that this combination does not disclose, teach, suggest or render obvious the present invention, particularly as set forth in independent claim 1 and in the claims depending therefrom. For example, and contrary to the statements in the Office Action, Gillich et al. does not disclose, teach or suggest a thin flexible glass sheet that is adhered to and that substantially conforms to a curved exterior surface of a mirror substrate. The protective layer 101 of Gillich et al. is clearly defined as comprising a silicon dioxide or aluminum oxide (column 1, lines 62-67 of Gillich et al.). The layers are applied to the body by deposition in vacuum or by thermal vaporization or by electron beam vaporization or by sputtering or by plasma polymerization or by chemical vapor deposition. See column 7, line 66 through column 8, line 12 of Gillich et al. Thus, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Gillich et al. of providing a glass sheet as a protective layer, and there is no disclosure or suggestion in Gillich et al. of providing a thin at least partially flexible glass sheet that is adhered to a substrate surface and that substantially conforms to a curved surface of the substrate.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that neither Lynam '451, Schmidt or Gillich et al., either alone or in combination with one another or with any other prior art of record, disclose, teach, suggest or render obvious the wide angle reflective element of the present invention, particularly as set forth in independent claim 1 and in the claims depending therefrom. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1-11 is respectfully requested.

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Claims 1-11 remain pending in the application. Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-11 are in condition for allowance and a notice to that effect is earnestly and respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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